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SUBJECT Petroleum Shipments From Baku and Astrakhan

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1. [redacted] the Caspian State Petroleum Shipping Company (ReydTanker), there were only four routes for shipping petroleum products from Baku by sea. The amounts shipped by rail were negligible, as more oil could be shipped by sea at a much lower cost. These water routes were as follows:

- a. Baku to Astrakhan
- b. Baku to Gurev (47-07N, 51-53E)
- c. Baku to Makhachkala (42-58N, 47-27E)
- d. Baku to Krasnovodsk (40-00N, 53-00E)

From Astrakhan some petroleum products were shipped to Makhachkala, but most of them were sent north via the Volga River to unknown destinations.

Baku to Astrakhan

2. This was the main run since the majority of the petroleum products shipped from Baku were transported on this run to Astrakhan or Gurev. In 1950, 6,400,000 tons were shipped to Astrakhan or Gurev. In 1951 it was planned to send six million tons to the same destinations. This total foresaw the following types of petroleum products:

- a. fuel oil - 1,100,000 tons
- b. gasoline (ethyl; color red and yellow) - one million tons
- c. ligroin - one million tons

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- (d) lubricating oil (grease, turbine oil, etc) - 500 thousand tons
- (e) kerosene - 900 thousand tons
- (f) Diesel fuel - one million tons
- (g) gas oil (gazoil) - 400-500 thousand tons /to Gurev as explained below/

3. These products were transported from Baku by the Caspian Tanker Fleet (KaspTanker) to the "14 Futovyy Morskoy Reyd", a roadstead situated in the Caspian Sea, south of the Volga delta. At this roadstead the Caspian tankers transferred their cargo to oil barges belonging to the ReydTanker fleet. The barges were towed to Astrakhan, where they were unloaded at various oil bases, namely the Il'inka oil base, the Oil Base No 8, Oil Base No 5, the Lenin Shipyard, and the 3rd International Shipyard. From these bases the petroleum products were shipped north by tug-towed barges operated by the VolgaTanker shipping company. I cannot give details on the destination of the various products.

4. The overall time element involved in transporting petroleum products from Baku to Astrakhan was about five days, broken down in the following manner:

- (a) 10 hours for loading at Baku
- (b) 35 hours for the normal run to the 14-Foot Roadstead. In case of storm or other difficulties, the time would be longer.
- (c) 10 hours for the transshipment from tankers to barges at the roadstead
- (d) Two days for the normal run from the roadstead to Astrakhan
- (e) 10 hours to unload the cargo at the oil bases.

5. At the 14-Foot Roadstead there was a four-or five-thousand-ton steel ship, the Donbass, which was 100 m long and 10 m wide. It was used as the control point for the operations of transloading. This ship was unable to move by itself and had to be towed to and from Astrakhan. During the months of operations, from approximately the middle of March to about the middle of December when the Volga River was navigable, the Donbass was anchored at the roadstead. From December to March the Volga was frozen and the ship was taken to Astrakhan.

6. The personnel aboard the Donbass were representatives of the two shipping companies involved in the movement of petroleum products on the Caspian Sea, KaspTanker and ReydTanker. The primary function of this base was to insure the safe arrival of the cargo and the steady and uninterrupted loading and unloading operations. This agency was divided into two sections, the Controlling or Dispatching Section and the Unloading and Loading Section.

(a) The Dispatching Section was responsible for:

- (1) Charting the route of the KaspTankers and the ReydTankers.
- (2) Maintaining contact with the KaspTankers and the ReydTankers and noting estimated times of arrival and actual times of arrival.
- (3) Supervising the operation of transferring the oil.
- (4) Controlling the time to load the barges and managing the accounts of these operations.

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- (5) Supervising the operation of setting up a barge convoy and the departure times to Astrakhan and Gurev.
 - (6) Controlling the semi-monthly and monthly accounts of the work accomplished at the roadstead as well as keeping a log of the length of time the respective tankers remained at this roadstead.
- (b) The Loading and Unloading Section was responsible for:
- (1) Regulating the immediate unloading of the petroleum products from the tankers to barges.
 - (2) Keeping an account of the quantity and the quality of the products unloaded by the tankers.
 - (3) Preparing the documentation of the receipt-transfer of the cargo.
 - (4) Compiling a record of the unloading work.
 - (5) Arranging the pre-set norm of the operation.
 - (6) Assuring that the barges were properly loaded and not overloaded.

Baku to Gurev

7. This was a secondary run and in 1951 it was planned to transport 400-500 thousand tons of gas oil (Gazoil) earmarked for the Gurev Refinery Plant No 441. The oil was transported from Baku to Gurev via the 14-Foot Roadstead and transloaded twice. It was taken to the 14-Foot Roadstead by the KaspTanker fleet, transloaded to ReydTanker barges, which were towed to the Gurev Roadstead. Both roadsteads operated in exactly the same manner. At the Gurev Roadstead the cargo was transferred to smaller barges of the ReydTanker fleet and taken to an oil base on Peshnoy Island /4649N-5142E/. From this oil base the petroleum was piped to the Gurev refinery plant. This pipeline was laid on the bottom of the sea and was about 30 km long and 35 cm in diameter.
8. The overall time element involved in transporting the petroleum from Baku to Gurev was also approximately five days with a similar breakdown as given above. A normal run from the 14-Foot Roadstead to the Gurev Roadstead was two days.

Other Runs

9. The Baku-Makhachkala run was a secondary run and about one million to a million and a half tons of crude oil were transported yearly directly from Baku to Makhachkala by the KaspTanker fleet. The oil was to be refined in Makhachkala. This operation proceeded without interruption during the whole year. The time element on this run was about two days, with 10 hours used to unload at Makhachkala.
10. The run from Baku to Krasnovodsk was also a secondary run. About one million tons of crude oil were moved yearly from Baku directly to Krasnovodsk. The run took approximately one day.

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11. The ReydTanker fleet transported yearly about 800 thousand tons of crude oil (Tuymazinskaya Neft) from Astrakhan to Makhachkala. This oil came from the region of Tuymazy 5436N-5344E. This region was called a second Baku and exploitation of the fields began after the war, in 1947 or 1948. This Tuymazy oil was rather light in weight, of low viscosity, and had a very low igniting, or exploding, temperature, much lower than the oil from Baku. [redacted] positive, that this oil was transported from Tuymazy to Astrakhan by the VolgaTanker fleet via the Kama and the Volga rivers. In Makhachkala it was presumably refined as gasoline.

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